

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Kindly change the paragraph starting at page 12, line 20 as follows:

The optical coupling module 415 is further detailed in US Patent Application Serial # ~~09/181,145~~ No. 6,829,152, which is incorporated herein by reference. In one particular embodiment, an optical coupling module is an assembly that is couplable, for example, to the optical fibers 420-430, comprising a first focusing element and a second focusing element, the first element positioned on a first optical axis to receive output light beams from the optical fibers and direct the light beams to intersect an optical axis at a first intersection position. The second focusing element is spaced apart from the first focusing element by a distance along the optical axis, the separation being selected to parallelize the light beams received from the first optical element. When compared to conventional fiber coupling methods, the coupling module method of FIG. 4A advantageously reduces the number of focusing optical assemblies. Corollary advantages may include a simplified alignment procedure and smaller transverse dimensions of a packaged fiber optic polarization separator/combiner.